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AUTHOR Hart, Stuart N.
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ABSTRACT

Fourth grade students (N=669) in a suburban middle class school corporation were given the Paired Hands Test (PHT), measuring the others-concept, in conjunction with a special needs screening process. The screening process required that all fourth grade teachers tentatively identify all children having a significant learning-behavioral problem of a specific type and then judge each identified student's functioning for each of 23 specific behavioral-learning problem characteristics. Screening results were analyzed by educational-psychological specialists to determine special need patterns. PHT results were compared for all relevant identified major groups and subgroups and for fourth graders referred for psychological evaluations by traditional procedures. In general, students identified as having special needs had lower others-concepts than those not so identified. Subgroup comparisons indicate that some special needs groups have low others-concepts while some do not and suggest that the PHT provides information not available from other sources. (Author)

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Stuart N. Hart

Indiana-Purdue University at Indianapolis

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Need and Associated Problem

Through legislation and state rules (Indiana State Board of Education, 1973) Indiana public schools are required to meet appropriately the educational needs of all school age children regardless of existing handicapping conditions. In Lawrence Township, a suburban Indianapolis public school corporation, it was determined that a need for tentative identification of children with special needs existed so that further investigations leading to the fulfilling of the state mandate might be more efficiently and effectively pursued. This school corporation had previously offered special program help to only the mentally retarded students and was preparing for the first time to offer assistance to other socially, emotionally and learning disordered students. It was decided that, under these conditions, a measure of attitudes toward others should be added to more usual screening procedures.

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Purpose and Expectations for this Study

As a psychological consultant for the school corporation of concern I was given the opportunity to help determine the form of screening procedures to be used. It was my intention to include in the screening program procedures which

might help partially answer the following two questions: 1) do students tentatively identified by teachers and by teachers plus educational specialists as having special needs have lower others-concepts than students not so identified and, 2) does a measure of others-concept add information not provided by more traditional screening procedures.

My assumptions were that a lower others-concept would be found for those thought to have special needs or problems because of the poor interpersonal relationships and self-concepts often found for the handicapped (Hewett, 1974) and that the teachers would tend to accurately identify students with poor others-concepts as students with poor personal and social adjustment, since teachers' judgments have been found to be, in general, valid and reliable indicators of pupil adjustment (Bower, 1967).

Student Population, and Teacher and Specialist Judges

All regular 4th grade classes in the school corporation were included in the data gathering incorporating screens using teacher opinion and the measure of the others-concept. Six-hundred and ninety students of mostly middle class socio-economic background were judged by their teachers who numbered 27. The school corporation provides, in general, a traditionally structured and academically oriented program. While the teacher opinion screening procedures were applied to all grade levels the others-concept measure was applied only to 669 available 4th graders, of 690 possible. The 4th grade was chosen because it is a transition period noted for the stress it places on learners with problems (Bower, 1967). The results from the teacher survey were later reviewed and assigned priorities by me, as School Psychologist for the system, and by its Special Education Director.

Techniques and Procedures

The Paired-Hands Test (Zucker & Barnett, 1973), as the measure of others-concept, was administered to all 4th grade classes within a 2 week period in May of 1974. My knowledge of the existence of this test and its ability to discriminate between those who did and did not have positive others-concepts as exhibited in task behavior and interpersonal interactions in group settings led me to this choice and, in fact, motivated initial interest in this study. The characteristics of this test have been described by others in the papers presented before mine today. When the Paired-Hands Test was administered data was also gathered so that the sex, school, and socioeconomic status of the school of the student could be related to results.

A survey of teacher opinion (Hart and Hengstler, 1974) relative to learner characteristics was completed by all 4th grade teachers in late January and early February of 1974, 3 to 4 months before the PHT administration. The survey required that the teacher first identify all the children having a significant learning-behavioral problem of a specific type and that each child so identified then be judged on a scale including five levels of problem seriousness for each of 23 specific learning-behavioral problem characteristics. The items were selected from those commonly considered to be associated with, and in various combinations helpful in discriminating between, mental retardation, specific learning disabilities, and emotional-behavioral problems. The survey was developed to give attention to special needs as characterized by Hewett (1968 & 1974) and Bower (1967) and as found important in my experience and by the survey's co-developer, Ms. Susan Hengstler, Special Education Director for the Lawrence Schools. The results from the teacher survey, as previously mentioned, were reviewed by Ms. Hengstler and me. Those appearing to us to have strong patterns

suggestive of special needs were identified. Four groupings were to result from this process: those not tentatively identified, those tentatively identified by teachers only, those tentatively identified by teachers and specialists, and those identified by teachers with or without specialist agreement.

(Transparencies of survey material shown here.)

The PHT and the survey both appeared to meet most of Bower's (1967) prerequisites for screening procedures. This combination did not, however, directly employ peer judgments.

In addition to the PHT and the teacher survey, including tentative pattern analysis judgments, data was later available to indicate which students in this group were referred for psychological evaluations when they were 4th graders and which students were eventually given special education programs.

Statistical procedures were applied to the data from this investigation to determine whether the groupings resulting from the survey differed significantly from each other in PHT scores; whether PHT scores were related to sex, school, and socioeconomic status; whether those with extreme PHT scores were disproportionately represented among those identified by teachers alone or teachers and specialists as compared to those not identified; whether those with identified special needs patterns differed from the total population; and whether those referred for psychological evaluation or given special education programs had PHT scores on the average significantly different from the 4th grade as a whole. In addition a factor analysis of PHT scores and specific survey categories was to be completed.

Results

The results, to date, from this investigation are presented in tables I-VII. Factor analysis results and some between and within sex differences are not yet available, but expected soon. To clarify the material presented the following partial key which runs across tables may be helpful:

NI = not identified as having special needs

I = identified by teachers with or without specialist agreement as having special needs

TI = identified by teachers only as having special needs

TSI= identified by teachers and specialists as having special needs

(Show Transparency of Table 1)

In Table I it will be noted that socioeconomic status differences exist with higher PHT scores accompanying higher status. This is consistent with previous studies of PHT performance. It will also be noted that PHT means for all major groupings of those tentatively identified as having special needs are lower in a statistically significant way from the mean for those not so identified. Those identified by teachers only (TI) did not however differ significantly from those identified by teachers plus specialists (TSI).*

(Show Transparency of Table II)

In table II it will be noted that the degree to which students are tentatively identified as having special needs differs across schools.

(Show Transparency for Table III)

Table III indicates that the relationship found between the degree to which a PHT score is extreme and whether or not a person is tentatively identified as having special needs could occur by chance in as many of 7 to 8% of such studies if the two variables were independent.

*Addendum: Information received at the last moment and added to Table I indicates that identified males as compared to not identified males and identified females as compared to not identified females have lower PHT scores, but that the differences are only significant for the females.

(Show Transparency for Table IV)

Table IV indicates that those identified by the teacher only (TI) on the survey instrument with no pattern comprehended by the evaluation specialists make significantly lower PHT scores than 4th graders as a whole; while those with patterns suggestive of slow learner functioning do not.

Table IV also indicates that those identified by teachers plus specialists and also showing a survey pattern suggestive of behavior-emotional or learning disabilities problems make significantly lower scores on the PHT than the 4th grader population as a whole.

(Show Transparency for Table V)

Table V displays a simple count of those tentatively identified and those not identified as having special needs who made scores at or below negative 1, 1.25, and 2.0 standard deviations from the 4th grade mean. No statistical tests have yet been applied but there are substantially more with low scores who were not identified.

(Show Transparency for Table VI)

During the 4th grade 24 students were referred by a traditional referral-form procedure for psychological evaluations. For twenty of these PHT scores were available. Table VI indicates that the mean PHT score for these twenty was significantly lower than the mean score for the total 4th grade population.

(Show Transparency for Table VII)

The last table, Table VII, indicates that the mean of the PHT scores for those who were given special education programming for the first time in the 5th grade is lower but not significantly lower than the mean of the PHT scores for the 4th grade population.

Interpretation

The first question raised in this study was, "Do students tentatively identified by teachers and by teachers plus educational specialists as having special needs have lower others-concepts than students not so identified?" The evidence appears to support a yes answer to this question. The major groups identified had statistically lower PHT scores than did those not identified. Particularly low scores were found for some of the subgroups within the identified group as a whole which gives support to the assumption that students identified as having poor personal-social adjustment also have poor others-concepts. However, the degree to which these are meaningful differences needs further consideration. For example, the differences may be at least partially explained by differences in identification and PHT score levels within and between sexes. Males in general are more likely to be identified as having special needs and make lower PHT scores than females. Data not fully considered but received just recently indicates that males identified make lower PHT scores than males not identified and that the same is true for females, but the differences are only significant for females. Our numbers are small and further study is needed.

The second question raised initially was, "Does the others concept add information not provided by more traditional screening measures?" The evidence supporting a yes answer to this question appears relatively strong. While the PHT scores for those identified as having special needs were lower than those not identified, the majority of those with extremely low others concepts as measured by the PHT were not recognized as having special needs by teachers. In addition those identified by teachers as having special needs but in a very unclear fashion were found to have quite low others concepts. The teachers were concerned but did not clearly indicate the nature of their concerns in an

interpretable fashion. While this may be due to the lack of directness with which the screening procedures focused on the others-concept and to the manner in which a traditionally structured academic program shields true manifestations of negative or low others-concepts, it suggests that a measure of the others-concept would be a valuable addition to more usual screening procedures.

In addition to these findings the consideration should be given to the relatively high PHT scores found for those tentatively identified as having characteristics associated with slow learner functioning and to the differences between PHT scores for these in different schools and in schools associated with different socioeconomic status.

The findings associated with slow learner characteristics and SES level have been noted by others but are not fully explained and deserve further study. The differences in PHT performance levels associated with different schools while probably associated with SES levels may have other meanings of importance. The factor analysis in process and further study of data presently available may bring some clarification, but further investigations will be needed of the others-concept in general and of its relationships to individuals with special needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The questions raised in the beginning of this study are partially answered.

Students in the 4th grade who are considered to have special needs by teachers and educational specialists are also likely to have others-concepts lower than their class average as measured by the PHT. However, a measure of the others-concept appears to provide information not provided by usual screening procedures as supported by evidence that a majority of the students who have significantly low others-concepts as measured by the PHT are not identified as having special needs through usual screening procedures and there appear to be important differences in PHT performance of subgroups of those identified as having special needs.

To the degree that a positive others-concept is considered to be important to educational and general life success, and to the degree that the PHT is considered to be an adequate tool for measuring the others concept, it is my conclusion that the PHT can be an important addition to screening procedures used to identify students with special needs.

To fully explore the potential of the PHT and others-concept relative to special needs the following research directions appear logically dictated from the results of this study:

1. Longitudinal studies of the others-concept of special-needs persons should be conducted.
2. Differences in the others-concepts of persons having carefully and differentially diagnosed special needs should be studied.
3. The others-concept as measured by the PHT should be compared to teacher and peer judgments directly focusing on the others concept held by persons.
4. Between and within sex differences in the others-concept should be further investigated.
5. Behavioral manifestations of the others-concept should be further investigated.

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TABLES

TABLE I

PHT Score Comparisons for Identified and Not-Identified Groups, Sex, and SES Estimate

Variables		N	$\bar{X}$	σ or s	F	Probability	t	Probability
Total PHT population		669	84.48	10.35				
Scores for main 3 special needs groupings	NI	582	84.96	10.33	5.0223	<.01		
	TI	39	81.05	10.45				
	TSI	48	81.35	9.62				
Scores for identified and not-identified	NI	582	84.96	10.33	10.0407	<.01	3.1641	<.01
	I	87	81.22	9.94				
Scores for teacher only identified and not identified	NI	582	84.96	10.33	5.2331	<.01	2.2839	<.05
	TI	39	81.05	10.45				
Scores for teacher + specialist identified and not-identified	NI	582	84.96	10.33	5.4661	<.01	2.3345	<.05
	TSI	48	81.35	9.62				
Scores for teacher only identified and teacher + specialist identified	TI	39	81.0513	10.45	.0197	NS	-.1389	NS
	TSI	48	81.35	9.62				
Scores by sex	M	350	82.2257	10.14			-5.90	<.01
	F	319	86.9467	10.04				
Scores for identified and not-identified within sex	MI	67	80.9104	10.60	1.3071	NS	-1.1785	NS
	MNI	283	82.5971	10.02				
	FI	20	88.2500	7.48	4.7282	<.05	2.1690	<.05
	FNI	299	87.2609	10.12				
Scores by SES	high	92	87.03	10.12	4.7487	<.01		
	middle	403	84.55	10.59				
	low	174	82.95	9.66				

NI = not identified as having special needs

I = identified by teachers with or without specialist agreement as having special needs

TI = identified by teachers only as having special needs

TSI = identified by teachers and specialists as having special needs

TABLE II
Identified and Not-Identified
By Schools

	Count	NI	I	Total
School Code #	11	102	18	120
	12	82	28	110
	13	86	7	93
	14	84	13	97
	15	88	16	104
	16	67	5	72
	17	92	2	94
Total		601	89	690

CHI SQUARE = 30.8685

df = 6

Significance = 0.00003

TABLE III

Extreme PHT Scores and Identified Compared to Not-Identified Groupings

A. Not-Identified and Teacher Identified Within, at and beyond One Standard Deviation

Count	NI	I	Total
$X \geq +1\sigma$	97	8	105
$+1\sigma > X > -1\sigma$	400	60	460
$X \leq -1\sigma$	85	19	104
Total	582	87	669

CHI SQUARE = 5.2404
df = 2
Significance = 0.0729

B. Not-Identified and Identified Within, at and Beyond One and one-fourth Standard Deviations

Count	NI	I	Total
$X \geq +1.25\sigma$	68	5	73
$-1.25\sigma < X < +1.25\sigma$	466	70	536
$X \leq -1.25\sigma$	48	12	60
Total	582	87	669

CHI SQUARE = 5.0414
df = 2
Significance = 0.08040

TABLE IV

PHT Scores and Highly Tentative Pattern Analysis of Need Patterns Exhibited on Screening Form

A. Teacher-Only Identified With Least Clear Pattern Compared to Total PHT Population

	N	$\bar{X}$	t	Probability
TI - No Pattern	28	79.18	-2.71	<.02
Total PHT Population	669	84.48		

B. Teacher Only Identified With Slow Learner Pattern Compared to Total PHT Population

	N	$\bar{X}$	t	Probability
TI - S. L. Pattern	10	87.7	.984	NS
Total PHT Population	669	84.48		

C. Teacher + Specialist Identified With Clear Behavior-Emotional or Learning Disabilities Pattern Compared to Total PHT Population

	N	$\bar{X}$	t	Probability
TSI Behavior-ED or LD Pattern	18	79	-2.25	<.05
Total PHT Population	669	84.48		

TABLE V

Comparison of Count of Identified and Not-Identified With Extremely Low PHT Scores

Count	I	NI
$X \leq -1.0\sigma$	20	82
$X \leq -1.25\sigma$	12	47
$X \leq -2.0\sigma$	0	5

TABLE VI

PHT Scores for Students Referred as 4th Graders for Psychological Evaluations Compared to Total PHT Population

	N	$\bar{X}$	t	Probability
Referred	20	77.35	-3.08	.01
Total PHT Population	669	84.48		

TABLE VII

PHT Scores for Those Given Special Education Programming as 5th Graders Compared to Total PHT Population

	N	X	t	Probability
Programmed in Special Education	13	81.38	-1.08	NS
Total PHT Population	669	84.48		